



United States Department of Agriculture

Alaska Roadless Rulemaking



Forest Service

2001 Roadless Rule

- US Department of Agriculture issued a regulation to manage roadless areas nationally – the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule).
- Prohibits timber harvesting, road construction, and road reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas with limited exceptions.
- Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) were established by the 2001 Roadless Rule.
- 58.5 million acres, nationwide, are inventoried roadless areas.
- Tongass National Forest (16.7 M Acres) comprises 80% of Southeast Alaska.
- Approximately 55% of the Tongass National Forest is inventoried roadless (9.2 M Acres, 110 IRAs)

What is a Roadless Area?

- National Forest System lands
- Does not include designated Wilderness.
- 80% of IRAs exceed 5,000 acres and are normally without roads.
- 2001 Roadless Rule describes nine roadless characteristics.



2001 Roadless Rule – Alaska's Journey

- State of Alaska challenged inclusion of Chugach and Tongass National Forests.
- 2003 – USDA exempted the Tongass National Forest.
- 2011 – Federal District Court vacated Tongass National Forest exemption.
- 2015 – Ninth Circuit decision upheld the Federal District Court ruling to vacate the Tongass National Forest exemption.
- Today – 2001 Roadless Rule in effect across Alaska's national forests.
- Pending – State of Alaska lawsuit pending in District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals challenging the 2001 Roadless Rule's application in Alaska.

Why an Alaska Roadless Rule?

The Tongass National Forest is unique from other national forests.

- Size, percent inventoried roadless areas, dependency of local communities, and unique statutory considerations (Tongass Timber Reform Act, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act)

State of Alaska petitioned US Department of Agriculture Secretary

- Desire to provide for rural economic development opportunities in local communities.

Forest Service desires a long-term and durable approach to addressing roadless issues in Alaska.

Roadless Rulemaking

- This rulemaking process is about considering whether a state-specific approach to managing roadless areas is better than a one-size-fits-all rule that applies to all NFS lands.
- A state-specific rule would replace the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule on the Tongass National Forest; administrative provisions of a state-specific rule could be applied to the Chugach National Forest.

Proposed Alaska Roadless Rule

- Specific to Alaska
- Chugach National Forest – currently outside area of focus.
- Tongass National Forest – consider changing roadless area management.
- Could address activities that are allowed or not allowed.
- Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) could be modified and designated as Alaska Roadless Areas (ARAs).

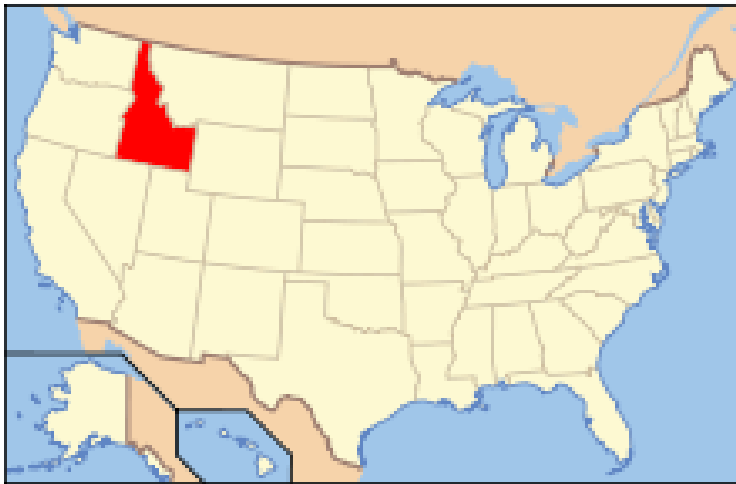
Proposed Alaska Roadless Rule

- Does not amend or revise the 2016 Tongass Land Management Plan.
- Does not authorize any ground disturbing activities.



Colorado and Idaho Roadless Rules

- State-specific roadless rules
- Idaho (2008) – zoned IRAs into 5 land categories; management-prohibitions and exceptions vary by category; specifically excluded some lands.
- Colorado (2012) – zoned IRAs into 2 tiers; included exceptions addressing state concerns, updated boundaries, and excluded some lands.



Public Participation to Date/Next Steps

- August 30, 2018 Notice of Intent – USDA initiated an environmental impact statement (EIS) and public rulemaking process to address the management of inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest.
- A 45-day scoping period ended October 15, 2018; a summary of the scoping comments is available online. A summary of the public meetings held during the scoping period is also available.
- Proposed Rule and Draft Environmental Impact Statement expected July 2019 – **additional comment period.**
- Final Environmental Impact Statement by Summer 2020.
- Secretary of Agriculture, or his designee, will make a decision on a final rule by Summer 2020.



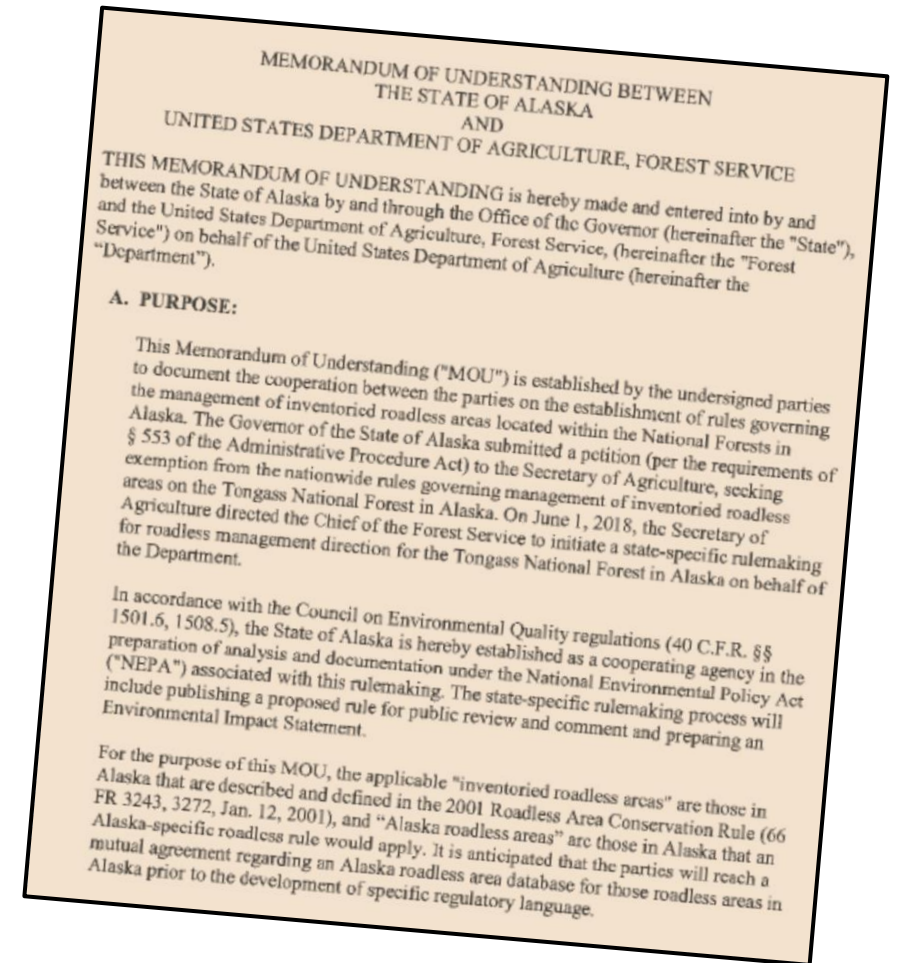
Government-to-Government

- Tribes have strong legal and cultural ties to aboriginal lands now managed as national forests, including the Tongass.
- Federally-recognized tribes were invited to become cooperating agencies as the Forest Service has federal trust responsibilities to tribal governments. Six tribes have joined as cooperating agencies.
- Forest Service will honor government-to-government relationships with tribes throughout this process.



State-Federal Partnership

- Memorandum of Understanding signed establishing the State of Alaska as a cooperating agency (August 2018).
- State of Alaska will provide expertise and specific input regarding state interests.
- Secretary of US Department of Agriculture retains decision-making authority.



Proposed Rule and DEIS will consider:

Geography

- What areas are of concern to Southeast Alaska residents?
- Should specific areas be included or excluded as an Alaska Roadless Area?

Activities

- What type of activities should be allowed in Alaska Roadless Areas?
- What types of activities should be prohibited in Alaska Roadless Areas?



Where to Find Additional Information

- On the internet at:
www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54511
www.fs.usda.gov/roadmain/roadless/alaskaroadlessrule
- Forest Service, Attn: Alaska Roadless Rule,
 P.O. Box 21628, Juneau, Alaska 99802
- akroadlessrule@fs.fed.us

